



United States Department of the Interior

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OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

MAR 7 1975

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Dear Mr. Secretary:

The resettlement of the Bikini Atoll which was used for nuclear weapons testing is resulting in a high degree of public, United Nations and Congressional interest. A Master Plan has been developed, extensive crops planted, and 40 houses and a school have been built.

The Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands is prepared to construct 38 more houses and a dispensary in anticipation that some 500 Bikinians will be ready to return shortly. Recent radiological information indicates a need for a comprehensive follow-on survey so the project was halted. Despite assurances that the atoll is safe, the attitude and fears of the people are being influenced by various outside groups, many of whom are critics of the nuclear program. If we are to avoid disrupting the resettlement plans at Bikini, and the loss of our credibility with the people, we must answer the critics. To do this we need a great deal of additional data on the radiological situation at Bikini Atoll. Since the Bikini radiological surveys were made in the 1960's more sophisticated and sensitive instrumentation has become available. Accepted radiological practices have become more stringent and there has been extensive land clearing for planting crops, which may have affected the radiation situation on the islands.

The Energy Research and Development Administration is prepared to conduct an additional radiological survey of Bikini Atoll beginning in April if logistics support can be provided to include:

1. Two helicopters and an associated support platform for about 12 days of flight operations at Bikini Atoll.
2. Airlift from CONUS to Bikini Atoll and return for ERDA technical equipment and personnel.

There is a longer term problem of developing a current documentation of the residual radioactivity on all the islands that received fallout from U.S. nuclear weapons tests. This also could be accomplished, starting in April or later in the year, with ERDA providing the technical resources. Such a survey would require an additional 30 days of flight operations at several atolls.

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& ACTIONS

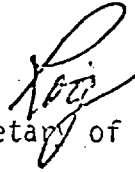
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As you know, neither the Energy Research and Development Administration nor the Department of the Interior have this kind of integrated logistics support capability. Since the situation has potentially serious political implications for the U.S. Government and the Administration, I strongly request that you consider providing the necessary support from Department of Defense resources. Your personal attention and early response would be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely yours,



Secretary of the Interior

Hon. James R. Schlesinger
Secretary of Defense
Washington, D.C. 20301